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ERS NEWSLETTER

A Bimonthly Newsletter for Economic Research Service Employees and Colleagues

June/July 1992

Volume 10, Number 3

Greenshields Appointed Deputy Administrator



Bruce Greenshields has been appointed to the newly created position of deputy administrator for information resources and management operations. He will manage ERS's information resources

and several program support operations.

Greenshields joined ERS in 1967 as an economics assistant and has since worked as an economist in the Western Hemisphere Branch of the Foreign Regional Analysis Division, Developed Countries Program Area of the Foreign Demand and Competition Division, and Program Evaluation and Development Staff. He has been ERS assistant administrator since 1981. He also served in the U.S. Peace Corps in Brazil and the U.S. Army in Korea.

Greenshields is editor of *Agricultural Economics*, the journal of the International Association of Agricultural Economists. He

organized the contributed paper competitions and sessions for the past three International Conferences of Agricultural Economists (1991 in Japan, 1988 in Argentina, and 1985 in Spain) and assisted Kenneth Farrell with the contributed paper competitions and sessions for the prior two conferences (1982 in Indonesia and 1979 in Canada). He coedited the proceedings of those conferences. Greenshields launched and was the first editor of the *IAAE Newsletter*. He has also been editor of the *AAEA Newsletter* and AAEA membership committee chair. He has a B.A. in political science and an M.A. in economics from American University.

Christmas in April

Thirty-eight ERS employees, friends, and family members joined 3,000 area volunteers for the annual "Christmas-in-April" project. Since 1983, this program has provided materials and volunteers to repair the homes of elderly, disabled, and low-income residents who are physically or financially unable to do the work themselves. Local "Christmas-in-April" organizations have helped renovate more than 700 homes in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

Volunteers arrived in Anacostia at the "ERS house," owned by Mrs. Mamie Hayes, at 8:00 a.m. on April 25 and worked through the day on

a variety of fix-up projects. While the carpentry detail made repairs to the garage, the painting crew was busy cleaning, scraping, spackling, sanding, and applying new color to 7 rooms. Two ERS plumbers worked on chronic drainage problems, and the electrical team tackled a rewiring job that restored lighting to several rooms.

Although "Christmas in April" involves the commitment of only 1 day for most volunteers, this project makes a dramatic difference in the lives of people who need help the most. The transformation of Mrs. Hayes' home now makes it possible for her to rent out her basement, supplementing her meager fixed income. Here's how she expressed

her gratitude: "Once upon a time I climbed ladders, scraped wallpaper, and helped my husband paint walls. At 76 years of age, I have to stay off ladders now. Along comes 'Christmas in April,' like a miracle."

Philip Friend coordinated the ERS effort as "House Captain," working with cocaptains Nancy Morgan and John Redman. Other "Christmas-in-April" volunteers were Kathy Augustine, Linda Bailey, Roy Darwin, Joan Donoghue, Millie Evans, Siobhan Fortier, Barbara Gilmartin, Rick Gilmartin, Bruce Greenshields, John Hackett, Janet Hackett, Jessie Hackett, Roger Hexem, Anicca Jansen, John Johnson, Eva Kalher, See CHRISTMAS, p. 4

Workforce Diversity Workshop

ERS sponsored a workshop on workforce diversity in Washington, D.C., May 4-5. The workshop was a followup to a similar one held last year. The purpose was to report on the progress of ERS workforce diversity efforts and to solicit new information on issues such as recruitment, retention, and mentoring. The more than 50 participants included university faculty and administrators and representatives from ERS and other USDA agencies.

The workshop was an agencywide initiative to develop a network among ERS and outside organizations to exchange information of mutual benefit. Outside groups invited included the National Consortium for Educational Access, Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, and Asian Pacific American Network in Agriculture. Representatives from these groups participated in group discussions with ERS staff on issues that included alternative approaches to workforce diversity, cultural diversity, and innovative ideas in recruitment. ERS's Equal Opportunity Committee led a panel discussion on workplace issues such as job satisfaction and employee retention. Several employees shared their personal views about working in ERS.

The conference generated some new ideas and provided some new viewpoints on current efforts. The response from participants who had

attended both conferences indicated that they saw substantial progress, but that there was room for more. The conference provided ERS management and staff a useful opportunity to assess the agency's present and future plans for diversifying its workforce.

ERS and GATT

Frederick Nelson led a USDA coordinating team to prepare supporting materials on U.S. domestic support measures for use in the GATT negotiations on agriculture. Besides ERS, the team included representatives from USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Economic Analysis Staff, Foreign Agricultural Service, and Office of the General Counsel.

The U.S. domestic support measures were one part of the U.S. submission to the GATT Secretariat in early March. Other parts of the submission dealt with market access and export subsidies. The U.S. submission, along with similar information from other countries, forms the basis for much of the current debate on GATT proposals for reducing the effects of trade-distorting agricultural policies. Countries were requested to submit proposed quantitative commitments for reducing subsidies and increasing market access. The Foreign Agricultural Service provided overall coordination of the U.S. submission. Because the GATT members have not reached an agreement on these commitments, the talks are continuing.

ERS Begins Policy Workshops in Central Europe

About a year ago, the first team of ERS commodity analysts traveled to Poland to begin training their Polish counterparts under ERS's Central Europe institution-building project [see *ERS Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Feb./Mar. 1991]. Since that time, work has accelerated and a large number of ERS staff have been involved in the project. The program has produced concrete results, and ERS has laid the foundation for a cooperative relationship with Central European counterparts that will endure long after funding has expired.

Using funds provided under the SEED II Act (Support for Emerging European Democracies), ERS has been working with the agricultural ministries of Central Europe to develop the economic information and analysis system needed to smooth these countries' transition to market economies. ERS's two principal goals in Central Europe are to develop a situation and outlook program and to build the skills needed to do policy analysis in a market environment. As a result of the first phase of ERS's program, five situation and outlook reports have been published and three more are planned in Poland, two reports are being produced in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics, and two reports are being produced in Hungary. ERS counterparts in Poland and the CSFR have found the training so valuable that they are reallocating resources to expand the program.

The second phase of ERS's program is a series of workshops in agricultural policy analysis. These intensive 1- to 2-week workshops in applied economic analysis are aimed both at mid- and high-level policymakers and working-level staff to provide them the economic tools needed to think through the

ERS Newsletter

Vol. 10, No. 3, June/July 1992

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The *ERS Newsletter* is published bimonthly by the Economic Research Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and distributed free to ERS employees, colleagues, and retirees. Send subscription requests and address changes to: *ERS Newsletter*, ERS/USDA, Rm. 1212, 1301 New York Ave. NW., Washington, DC 20005-4788 (phone 202-219-0310, fax 202-219-0044).

See ERS, p. 4

ERS's Electronic Workplace

Does "Do you have a telephone?" sound like an antiquated question? Of course you have a telephone. Everyone has a telephone. "Are you on the network?" will soon sound equally antiquated. Of course you will be on the network. Everyone will be on the network.

That is one of many implications of our recently adopted information resources management (IRM) strategic plan, which describes ERS's electronic workplace of the future. The plan has been distributed to all ERS staff. If you have not had a chance to read it, I urge you to do so.

The plan contains a vision of what agency computing could look like in 3-5 years, a vision of what top ERS managers *agree that it should look like*.

Your personal computer on your desktop will connect you (via ERSNET) to your ERS colleagues and to the rest of the world, as your telephone has in the past but in vastly superior ways. When you "talk" to colleagues, you talk when it is convenient for you, and they reply when it is convenient for them (an end to "telephone tag"). You will have a record of the "conversation." You can exchange information electronically—tables in spreadsheet or data base files, words in text files, figures in image files, or files that combine or link all three.

Your PC's connection to ERSNET will let you access other networks and data and information sources. ERSNET will have gateways to USDA's LAN (local area network), BITNET (the university network), INTERNET (a gateway to hundreds of other networks), the National Computer Center at Kansas City, the National Finance Center in New Orleans, and the ERS Reference Center.

A second implication of the strategic plan is that we will have agency hardware and software standards. For you at your PC to be able to access and use the features of ERSNET will require that your PC and peripheral hardware have some minimum levels of capability (such as memory, speed, graphics display, and network connection), that it be configured in a standard way, and that it or a larger PC in your workgroup be loaded with a standard set of software supported by ERS's Data Services Center (including operating system and environment, communications, and wordprocessing). Some standards are already in place; others will be adopted soon. This task is a high priority for the Working Group of the Agency IRM Committee.

A third implication of the strategic plan is that comprehensive coverage must be maintained in the agency data directory and certain relatively high-use data series must be maintained in the agency data base (and some of the data series must be publicly accessible). So their benefits can be realized, the agency data directory must be comprehensive and up-to-date and whatever is in the agency data base must be easily accessible. Defining "comprehensive" for the data directory is another high priority task for the Working Group. It also will be addressing the questions of what data series should be in the agency data base and how frequently they should be updated, among others.

The plan has additional implications for budgets (training, hardware, software, and maintenance), staff (types of skills needed in DSC staff and, again, training for all staff members), and IRM planning, management, and decisionmaking (which will continue to involve user input via the Working Group and its subcommittees).

The rapid developments in computing technologies present us with great opportunities to do our jobs better and more efficiently. Our challenge is to fully exploit these opportunities.


Bruce Greenshields

costs and benefits of alternative agricultural policies.

As the first step in this process, ERS hosted a group of four high-level policymakers from Poland and five from Hungary for a workshop on economic issues associated with agricultural policy alternatives. The workshop provided a broad overview of the role of government in promoting the efficient functioning of private markets, the most common objectives of government policies and the array of instruments that are used to implement policies, and the intended and unintended impacts of such policies. Case studies were also presented based on U.S. and EC experiences. In bringing together officials from both Hungary and Poland, ERS's goal was to enhance communication among decisionmakers and let

program participants learn from the experiences of other countries.

The workshop was organized by Jerry Sharples, Mathew Shane, Nancy Cochrane, and Edwin Young. Assistant secretary for economics Daniel Sumner welcomed participants, and presentations were made by John Dunmore, Richard Heifner, David Kelch, John Lee, Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Steve Magiera, and Scott Steele (OBPA). Sumner also hosted a luncheon and a field trip to Capitol Hill, where the group met with U.S. Senator Conrad Burns and Representative E "Kika" de la Garza, chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture.

This spring marks the beginning of a series of in-country workshops on applied economic theory and policy analysis. The first workshop, presented in Poland and the CSFR by Stephanie Mercier, provided an introduction to commodity supply,

demand, and price analysis. Mark Lundell and David Stallings presented a workshop on macroeconomic linkages to agriculture in Poland and the CSFR. The third workshop was presented in Poland, the CSFR, and Hungary by Praveen Dixit and Robert Reinsel on goals and consequences of government intervention in agriculture. The workshops were of interest to counterparts in all three governments who are making important policy decisions and are eager to learn about the experiences of other developed countries.

Future workshops will include price stabilization policies and USDA programs, the government role in agricultural marketing, futures markets, and forecasting consumer demand. Other proposed workshops include one on costs of production and one on the interaction of agricultural programs and environmental policies.

CHRISTMAS from p. 1

Penni Korb, Marcelle Lewis, Mary Mihalyi, Liana Neff, Steven Neff, Linda Nodine, Michael Ollinger, Janet Perry, Kenneth Robinson, Linda Scott, Martin Shields, David Stallings, Joyce Su, Fawzi Taha, Kevin Toland, Harry Vroomen, Robert Williams, and Danette Woo.



ERS employees, friends, and family members working at the "ERS house."





Tegene is New RTD Section Leader

Abebeyehu Tegene was recently named leader of the Land Use and Capital Investment Section, Land and Capital Assets Branch, Resources and Technology Division.

Since joining ERS in 1990, Tegene has been examining the role of expectations and speculative bubbles in the farmland market. During 1984-89, he was assistant professor of economics at the University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee).

Tegene has authored or coauthored 16 articles in

professional journals, including the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Journal of Quantitative Economics*, *Applied Economics*, *Southern Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*, and the *Journal of Economic Studies*, as well as ERS publications including *The Contribution of Speculative Bubbles to Farmland Prices* (TB-1782), coauthored with Frederick Kuchler.

Tegene has a B.S. in statistics from Addis Ababa University and an M.S. in statistics and a Ph.D. in economics from Iowa State University.

Highlights of Staff Activities

Agriculture and Rural Economy Division

Ronald Babula presented a seminar at Laval University on regional responsiveness of agricultural interest rates to U.S. Treasury bill rates • Faqir Bagi, David Bunker, and Janet Perry participated in a Washington Statistical Society seminar on categorical data analysis in the context of complex sample surveys • Jennifer Beattie participated in a conference on long-range perspectives on post-Cold War Europe sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Foreign Service Institute, in Washington, D.C. • Andy Bernat, Thomas Hady, Merritt Hughes, David McGranahan, and Timothy Parker participated in a conference on new technology for economic development, sponsored by the Congressional Clearinghouse for the Future, in Washington, D.C. • Linda Swanson spoke on rural population changes in the 1980's at a USDA Soil Conservation Service meeting, in Charleston, S.C. • Kenneth Deavers chaired and Sara Mazie was the U.S. delegate to

an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development council group meeting on rural development, in Paris, France

• Mazie also spoke on the importance of considering local development in a larger national and global context at an Iowa Rural Development Council meeting in Des Moines • Robert Gibbs presented a paper, "Comparing Wages Earned by Nonmetro and Metro Youth," at an Eastern Economic Association meeting, in New York, N.Y. • Annica Jansen participated in a rural development forum sponsored by the National Cooperative Business Association, in Washington, D.C. • Lorin Kusmin, John Redman, Thomas Rowley, David Sears, and Patrick Sullivan participated in a national conference of State Rural Development Councils, in Washington, D.C. • Sullivan also represented ERS at a Southern Region Program Advisory Committee meeting to make recommendations on programs of the Southern Rural Development

Center, in Atlanta, Ga. • Victor Oliveira participated in a conference on the changing face of agriculture, sponsored by Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences, in Washington, D.C. • Janet Perry participated in a conference on alternative farming systems and rural communities, sponsored by the National 4-H Center, in Washington, D.C. • Richard Reeder participated in an NC-137 regional research committee meeting on rural transportation, in Arlington, Va. • Gerald Schluter presented a paper, "Empirical Issues in Constructing a Disaggregated Household SAM" (coauthored with Kenneth Hanson and Adam Rose, Pennsylvania State University), at a Southern Regional Science Association meeting, in Charleston, S.C. • and Linda Swanson organized a seminar on "How ERS Uses Census Bureau Data," for demographers from developing countries, in Washington, D.C., which included John Cromartie, Paul Frenzen, and Robert Hoppe on the program.

Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division

To gather grain quality data and information in developing countries as part of a grain quality study, Kimberly Hjort traveled to the Philippines, Indonesia, and India; Maurice Landes traveled to Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh; Rebecca Lent traveled to Tunisia and Morocco; Emily McClain traveled to Brazil; and John Parker and Shahla Shapouri traveled to Egypt • Timothy Baxter presented a paper, "The Relationship between Exchange Rate Shifts and the Prices of Traded Agricultural and Nonagricultural Goods," and organized and chaired a plenary session on monetary union in Europe, at an Atlantic Economic Society meeting, in Nice, France • Mary Burfisher presented a paper, "Effects of a U.S.-Mexico Free Trade Agreement on Agriculture" (coauthored by Karen Thierfelder), at an International Trade Commission conference on economywide modeling of a North

America free trade agreement • William Coyle presented a paper, "U.S.-Japan Agricultural Trade: What Are the Issues?," at a Japan-America Society meeting, in Honolulu, Hawaii • Praveen Dixit, Bradley McDonald, and Vernon Roningen's paper, "Supplying Quantitative Analysis of Agriculture in the Uruguay Round," that was presented at an International Atlantic Economic Conference in Washington, D.C., was published in the best paper proceedings of the Atlantic Economic Society • William Liefert spoke on food distribution and shortages in the republics of the former Soviet Union at an Illinois Farm Bureau meeting, in Washington, D.C. • Mark Lundell spoke on how changes in Central and Eastern Europe will affect the U.S. grain marketing system at an NC-186 regional research committee meeting, in Washington, D.C. • Yuri Markish, Sharon Sheffield,

and David Carlson (Colorado Department of Agriculture), presented a geo-agricultural profile of the territories within the republics of the former Soviet Union at a Partners in Agricultural Resource Development meeting, in Washington, D.C. • Bob Robinson led the U.S. delegation to a meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Committee on Agriculture, in Paris, France • Shahla Shapouri presented the findings of a study on food strategies in Kenya, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, at a World Food Council meeting, in Rome, Italy • and Jerry Sharples spoke on the North America Free Trade Agreement and Thomas Vollrath served on a panel on international competitiveness at an NC-194 regional research committee meeting on the organization and performance of the world food system, in Washington, D.C.

Commodity Economics Division

Edward Allen traveled to Manhattan, Kans., to participate in the 1992 winter wheat quality tour • Mark Ash traveled to Pakistan and Sri Lanka to gather data and interview key government officials, flour millers, grain traders, and bakers for a grain quality study • Donald Blayney and James Miller participated in a Northeast dairy conference, in Baltimore, Md. • at a Tobacco Marketing Cost Study Committee meeting in Asheville, N.C., Thomas Capehart presented a paper, "Maryland, Dark Air-Cured, Flue-Cured, and Cigar Tobacco Supply and Disappearance," and Verner Grise spoke on the status of warehouse cost survey efforts • Grise also was interviewed by the Kentucky Farm Radio Network on the situation and outlook for burley tobacco • Nathan Childs, Hsin-Hui Hsu,

and William Lin traveled to Taipei, Taiwan, to discuss rice situation and outlook analysis with Taiwan Council of Agriculture staff • Hsu also presented a paper, "Reinstrumenting Agricultural Policy in Taiwan and GATT Compatibility," at a Chinese-American Academic and Professional Society meeting, in New York, N.Y. • Anthony Gallo spoke on changes in the food marketing system in 1992 at a seminar at the University of Maryland • Edward Glade spoke at a Mississippi State University staff seminar on weather-related delays on cotton harvest and ginning • Glade also presented a paper, "Market Impacts of Improved Cotton Quality Measures," at an engineered fiber selection conference, in Memphis, Tenn.

• Glade also was a U.S. observer at a USDA/International Universal Cotton Standards Conference, in Memphis, Tenn. • Glade also presented a paper, "ERS's Cotton Production and Ginning Research," at a Southern Cotton Ginnery Association meeting, in Memphis, Tenn. • Roger Hoskin, Chin-Zen Lin, and Ian McCormick traveled with the Polish oilseed team to Illinois to visit U.S. farms and farming operations • McCormick also presented a paper, "Production Economics and Production Risk" (coauthored with Bengt Hyberg), at a U.S. canola conference, in Washington, D.C. • Hyberg also presented a paper, "Australian Agricultural Policy and Environmental Degradation," at Rutgers University • Doyle Johnson and Patrick O'Brien spoke on floriculture research at a Council

of Horticulture Associations meeting, in Washington, D.C.

• **Tanya Roberts** spoke on the use of animal drugs at doses over the legal limit to develop resistance of pathogenic microorganisms at an Animal Health Institute meeting, in Washington, D.C. • **Robert Skinner** presented a paper, "U.S. and World Cotton Outlook," at a Virginia Farm

Bureau Federation meeting, in Franklin, Va. • **David Smallwood** and **Jon Weimer** traveled to the University of New Hampshire to work with Extension Service and Food and Nutrition Service staff in developing an evaluation prototype for the "Great Beginnings" nutrition education program targeted toward pregnant teenagers • **Fred Surls**

and **Gene Hasha** participated in a meeting of government and international organization staffers involved in projections work, in Paris, France • and **Thomas Tice** presented a paper, "1991/92 Outlook for Feed Grains," at an Industry Outlook Conference, in Denver, Colo.

Resources and Technology Division

Marcel Aillery, Joseph Cooper, John Miranowski, Michael Moore, and Marca Weinberg met with experts in Oregon and Washington working on salmon recovery plans for the Columbia River Basin and with staff at Oregon State University and Washington State University as part of the Endangered Species Study

• **Miranowski** also chaired a session and **James Hrubovcak, Betsey Kuhn, and Matt Rendleman** participated in working groups at a biofuels workshop, sponsored by USDA, DOE, and the Renewable Fuels Association, in Chicago, Ill. • **Miranowski** also represented ERS at a Social Science Agricultural Agenda Project meeting, in Minneapolis, Minn. • **Neil Hohman, Hrubovcak, Kuhn, and Rendleman** visited ARS labs in Peoria, Ill., and traveled to Purdue University to discuss ethanol technology issues • **Eldon**

Ball presented a paper, "Measuring Sustainable Development" (coauthored with **Richard Nehring**), at a Southern Regional Information Exchange Group meeting, in New Orleans, La. • **Margriet Caswell and Robbin Shoemaker** visited Idaho and Washington as members of USDA's Water Quality Area Study Team to protest a survey of agricultural production practices and to examine water use in specific areas • **Ram Chandran** presented a paper, "A Stochastic Dominance Analysis of the Yield Effects of Chemical Use on Vegetable Farms"; and **Chandran** presented a paper, "The Impact of Integrated Pest Management on Pesticide Use in the United States Vegetable Industry" (coauthored by **Ann Vandeman, Utpal Vasavada, and David Shank**), at an American Chemical Society meeting, in San Francisco, Calif. • **Stan Daberkow** presented a paper, "Risks in Crop Cultivation

and Their Influences on the Application of Economic Indicators" (coauthored by **Wen-yuan Huang**), at a Food and Agriculture Organization meeting, in Rome, Italy • **Noel Gollehon** participated in a Great Plains Agricultural Council Water Committee meeting, in San Antonio, Tex. • **Robert Kellogg** participated in the President's Water Quality Initiative workshop on regionalization issues, in Ames, Iowa • **Rita McMillan and Kenneth Robinson** participated in a Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences conference at Purdue University • **Marca Weinberg and Carl Mabbs-Zeno (ATAD)** traveled to Zambia to conduct an environmental needs assessment • and **Gene Wunderlich** traveled to Bulgaria to work on land reform issues as part of ERS's Central European institution-building project.

Data Services Center

At a SAS User Group International meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii, **Linda Atkinson** presented a personal computer hands-on workshop on SAS/ASSIST software; and **Charles Hallahan** presented a

paper, "Extending the SAS System's Statistical Capabilities with SAS/IML Software" • and **Agapi Somwaru** presented a paper, "Interspatial and Intertemporal Comparisons of Agricultural

Productivity" (coauthored with **Eldon Ball, RTD, and George Douvelis, RTD**), at a meeting of the Operations Research Society of America and the Institute of Management Sciences, in Orlando, Fla.

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Millie Evano and John Lee participated in the spring meeting of the USDA/Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Leadership Group, in San Germán, Puerto Rico • Lee also received the 1992 Great Plains Agricultural Council Outstanding Service Award, in Lincoln, Nebr.; participated in a meeting of the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences, in Washington, D.C.; presided over an AAEA Foundation Governing Board meeting, in Washington, D.C.; chaired the spring meeting of the National Agricultural Credit Committee, in Washington, D.C.; and participated in an International Agribusiness Management Association Symposium in Oxford,

U.K. • Paul E. Flaim participated in a USDA supervisory academy at Texas A&M University • Bruce Greenshields participated in a meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Agricultural Economists, in Jerusalem, Israel • Edward Reinsel was a lecturer and Edward Overton (ATAD) was session chairman at a workshop on preparation of agricultural censuses in transition countries, in Sophia, Bulgaria • Reinsel also participated in a National Academy of Sciences Committee on National Statistics meeting, in Washington, D.C. • and Reinsel also participated in a Census Advisory Committee on Agricultural Statistics meeting, in Suitland, Md.

ERS Alumni Notes

[We invite ERS alumni to write to us at the address on page 2 about what they or other alumni are doing, where they are living, etc.]

ERS retiree Peter Hansen (90) died May 1 in Minneapolis, Minn. • ERS retiree Carl Vosloh died May 18 in Mount Airy, Md.